

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the careful examination of the application.

35 U.S.C. §101:

In response to the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §101, that claim has been amended to define a program product on a computer readable medium. In view of the amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection.

Art Rejections:

Claims 1-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,775,729, hereinafter *Matsuo*. On page 3 of the Official Action in the description of the "plurality of controllers", the Official Action alleges that *Matsuo* teaches image development is done by a "PDL rasterizer in step 3907 and when this step is completed, image data is received from the PDL rasterizer in step 3908". Applicant submits that there is no specific teaching in *Matsuo* that the image development is done by a PDL rasterizer in step 3907 when "this step is completed". In addition, the Examiner alleges that *Matsuo* teaches that each controller requests the printing portion to start printing "after complete image development of a received print job". Again, Applicant submits that there is no specific teaching in *Matsuo* that each controller requests the printing portion to start printing "after complete image development of a received print job".

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the outstanding rejection of claims 1-9 should be withdrawn.

In spite of such deficiencies in the prior art reference, and to further expedite prosecution of the application, the foregoing amendments to claims 1-9 have been

made to more further distinguish the claims from the prior art. Specifically, claim 1 now recites an image forming apparatus that includes, among other elements, a plurality of controllers, wherein each of the controllers comprises a data receiving portion for receiving reception data; an image developing portion for developing said received reception data into intermediate data and for storing said intermediate data in a queue; and an image transmitter for retrieving said queued intermediate data, converting the intermediate data to raster data, and for transmitting the raster data to the printing portion. Claim 7 has been amended to define a control method which includes, among other things, that each controller issues a print request to the printing portion after complete development of a received print job data into intermediate data; storing each print request sequentially; converting the intermediate data into raster data; and transmitting the raster data to the printing portion in the stored print request sequence. Claim 8 defines an image data processing method that includes receiving a print job; developing the print job and generating intermediate data; and requesting a printing portion to start printing after completion of the developments of the received print job into said intermediate data. And, claim 9 has been amended to define a program product on a computer readable medium, wherein the program comprises the steps of receiving a print job; developing the print job and generating intermediate data; and requesting a printing portion to start printing after complete image development of the received print job into said intermediate data.

In general, *Matsuo* discloses a complex printing control wherein multiple print requests from multiple different clients are processed and routed to multiple print engines. In contrast, the present invention is primarily concerned with a plurality of

controllers, each of which is designed to use "a printing portion". Thus, the goals of the present invention are to make sure that the image data, when transmitted to the printing portion, can be printed at a highest possible speed, and also to reduce the time when the printing portion is under the exclusive control of one of the controllers, but is not printing.


In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the foregoing amendments and to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

In the event that there are any questions concerning this response, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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